



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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THREE COUNTY CONSORTIUM IN CENTRAL WISCONSIN RECEIVES \$250,000 FAMILY CARE GRANT
Marathon, Portage, Wood Counties to Build Long Term Care Partnership

WISCONSIN RAPIDS— The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services has awarded a \$250,000 grant to a Marathon-Portage-Wood county consortium to develop a plan to expand the successful Family Care program that gives seniors and people with disabilities the choice to get long term care in their own homes and communities as an alternative to nursing home care. Governor Jim Doyle unveiled plans in his annual State of the State address Tuesday to expand the Family Care program statewide within 5 years.

“Seniors and people with disabilities overwhelmingly prefer home and community care options to nursing homes when possible,” said Helene Nelson, Secretary of the Department of Health and Family Services. “Family Care has proven people can get the long-term care they need and prefer, and that this can save money for taxpayers by helping people stay healthy and independent.”

Secretary Nelson was in Wisconsin Rapids Wednesday to award the Family Care Planning Grant to Community Care of Central Wisconsin to develop a plan to expand Family Care as quickly as possible into Wood and Marathon Counties, based on successful experience in Portage County.

State Senator Julie Lassa added, "I think this Family Care Program grant is a wonderful opportunity for the three counties - Wood, Portage, and Marathon - to work together to ensure that their seniors can get access to the services that they need and stay in their homes longer."

Community Care of Central Wisconsin a multi-county consortium composed of: North Central Health Center (Marathon County), Marathon County Department of Social Services, Wood County Unified Services, Wood County Department of Social Services, and Community Care of Portage County.

The Governor's goal is to eliminate all waitlists for home and community-based care over five years as Family Care expands across the State. While Wisconsin has been a national leader in offering community-based alternatives to nursing home care, about 11,500 people are on waitlists for community care statewide.

There are currently 226 people in Marathon County and 234 people in Wood County on a waiting list for community care.

Portage County was one of five Family Care pilot sites in Wisconsin and will use its experience to help lead Community Care of Central Wisconsin. A recent evaluation of Family Care found that it saved an average of \$452 per person per month in total Medical Assistance expenditures in the four non-Milwaukee pilot counties during 2003 and 2004. It did so by helping people stay healthy and more independent in their homes and communities. Family Care also saved money in Milwaukee.

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